

[Phila J. Myers]

[? - LA ?]

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Cecile Larson ADDRESS 430 So. 17

DATE Sept. 29, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

1. Name and address of informant Phila J. Myers, 509 So. 11
2. Date and time of interview Sept. 29, 1 — till 4.
3. Place of interview. 509 So. 11
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant. Ralph Skinner, 22d and D.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you. None
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. One small room, very crowded but neat and comfortable.

FORM B Personal History of informant

NAME OF WORKER Cecile Larson ADDRESS 430 So. 17

DATE Sept. 29, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mrs. Phila J. Meyers.

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1. Ancestry. Scotch Irish — from Newfoundland.
2. Place and date of birth — Lancaster territory July 19, 1862.
3. Family. Father, Dr. T.J. Maxwell.
4. Place lived in, with dates. Always Lancaster Co. except for 6 mo. in Iowa.
5. Education, with dates. Very meagre.
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates. Just housekeeping, married at 16.
7. Special skills and interests. No particular.
8. Community and religious activities. Methodist church.
9. Description of informant. Bright, energetic and sincere. Not at all feeble for her 76 years but seemingly disappointed in life altho uncomplaining.
10. Other points gained in interview.

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FORM C

Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER Cecile Larson ADDRESS 430 So. 17

DATE Sept. 29, 1938. SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Phila J. Myers.

My father packed up the family in Wisconsin and came out here after getting a 2nd grade certificate to be a doctor. He doctored people for miles around but didn't get any money for

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it, just potatoes, flour and a slab of meat or garden vegetables. This was still a territory and father bo't some land on South 14th about where Memorial Park is now for \$1.00 per acre. He also homesteaded on the west side of the road. He built a log cabin and I was born there. I was three days old before even the neighbors knew about me. The Indians were so bad that father was afraid to leave us. My mother was not a teacher but nevertheless she set up a school and taught pupils for 25¢ per pupil per week. Because of Indians father had to take the whole family with him whenever he make his calls.

He helped build houses and do threshing to get money for us and one of my most vivid memories is a threshing trip of fathers. The Indian scare was rather in the past and father decided to remain away from home over night at the place where he was helping. Along toward evenin my mother saw two horsemen coming toward the house and her first thought was Indians. She threw a blanket around herself, took the baby in her arms and with my brother on one side and she on the other we started for the river as the safest hiding place. We stayed there all night — we children slept a little but mother watched all night for the marauders. It was a happy moment when morning came and we heard father calling us. We had had no supper the 4 night before so we children stopped and had breakfast in a melon patch. The “Marauder” turned out to be just a couple of riders rounding up cattle.

For many months every night all the families up and down the creek would gather up all their possessions and put them and their children and the adults in a wagon and all go to some central cabin where the women and children would stay in the house and the men would sit out in the wagons and watch for Indians. The Indians often came after pillaging the gardens would come to the house and ask for more. We never refused them but it was often hard to see them take all we had hidden away after they had already pillaged the gardens.

My father was once called to Pleasantdale to take care of a woman who had been shot in the back with an arrow — by the Indians. She and her husband had been attacked by a

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“whooping bunch of Indians and he thinking they might not shoot a woman gave her the reins and he lay down in the wagon bed. The horses were scared and began to run and she was trying to keep them in the road when the arrow struck. He immediately came for father and we all went out there but it was a useless trip as she died the next day.

“Ague” was the most common illness in Nebr. at that time and my father was being called constantly to treat it. In another home there was a hysterical patient with suicidal intent. Father quieted her by giving her a few pills made from mother bread dough. It was a peculiar medicine but it quieted her so she would sleep.

We, my two brother and one sister trapped prairie chickens. We run their necks tucked them under the wing and packed them in barrels. As 5 soon as a trader came along we traded for new boots and dresses. We made many trips to Nebraska City for groceries and took along as money the salt from the Lincoln basin. (End)

We children would pile up the heavy wet masses of salt and father would throw it in the wagon, take it home and dry it on canvas.

I can still hear the “drip, drip,” of the wet salt on the slow journey home behind the ox team.

In those days the St. viaduct was a marsh full of cat tails and many times on our trip to the salt basin we saw Indians hiding in the rushes and we would have to turn back.

For one whole year we had nothing to eat but corn bread and pork. The break was made of meal, salt and water. To this day I can see my mother baking the bread on the hot stones of the fireplace flipping it in flapjack style and giving it to us good and hot.

A three man council selected the site of the capitol and much argument and many meetings were held. They wanted it at Yankee hill and went as far east as Ashland before deciding to put it where it is now. I was at the dedication ceremonies and played drop the handkerchief around the large flag pole they raised. I have challenged everyone and I am

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the first white child born in Lancaster Co and the oldest living person born in this county and still living here.

Sometimes my mother and father would go to Lincoln to sell their dutch cheese and other product and leave we children to harrow. My brother would coax me to harrow while he played with "joint [snakes?]." When he found 6 them he would break them all into pieces and hide each piece. Then the pieces would wiggle and come together again.

There were also hoop snakes. They had a beak about 5 inches long which they hooked onto their tail and rolled over and over. Sometimes they got their beak stuck into a tree and then died that way.